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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Interregional Union of Life Help for Mentally Handicapped Persons "Sail of Hope", a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

In this world, stability is determined by a balance of power, desires and actual possibilities. The socioeconomic development of any State depends on maintaining a balance between security and protection of the rights of all citizens in society, without exception. Absolutely all categories of persons require social justice: children, disabled persons, pensioners, and women and adolescents.

Social justice for the population is manifested by protecting the interests of vulnerable groups, particularly women and adolescent girls. The State's priorities are not confined to ongoing protection of the interests of the female half of the human race. The authorities are, above all, obliged to guarantee women's rights and take full responsibility for social and creative fulfilment for the largest possible proportion of the female population of the world.

The job of civil society is to keep a check on this process, to promote wider enjoyment of women's rights and creative potential and to devote its combined efforts to eradicating poverty and raising the population's standard of living, creating the conditions for the integration into society of vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups and creating full employment and a decent life for all, consistent with the work contribution and the needs of the world population.

The adoption of modern standards and laws at State and global level for the guarantee and promotion of the rights and potential of the female population; strict monitoring of the observance of approved rules and standards; the creation of well-paid, fairly paid, high-quality jobs; safe working conditions; increased social protection; promotion of international social norms; a strengthened social dialogue; and other measures – these will all contribute greatly to protection of the interests of women and continual improvement of the standard of living of the world population as a whole. However, in order to reduce poverty, defuse social tensions and achieve a sustained reduction in mass unemployment there will be a need for growth in the real economy, innovations in engineering, an industrial revolution, financial investment and the creation of new jobs in all sectors. This is the only approach which will dispel the emotional irritants in society and create a favourable environment both within the State and internationally. This is essential for social integration and cooperation, for observance of the guarantees and conditions for decent work, and for the highest possible level of employment among the world's working population, including women.

The following are all priority tasks of modern society: the eradication of violence against women and girls, including rigorous agreements on the promotion of gender equality; increased possibilities for women and a guarantee of their reproductive rights; access to reproductive health services; accessible, affordable health services, including emergency contraception for victims of violence; the timely resolution of all health consequences of violence, including physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health issues; the resolution of issues of violence against women and girls; the provision of accessible health services for them, including safe, effective and high-quality medicinal products, timely support for the treatment of injuries, psychological and mental-health support, emergency contraception, safe abortion services where these are permitted under national law, post-exposure prophylaxis against HIV infection; diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STI); training and continuing professional development for health

professionals for effective identification of and support for women victims of violence; and provision of legal advice by appropriately trained professionals.

The statement issued by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offers the hope of a bright future: "Violence against women is a heinous human rights violation, global menace, a public health threat and a moral outrage. No matter where she lives, no matter what her culture, no matter what her society, every woman and girl is entitled to live free of fear. She has the universal human right to be free from all forms of violence so as to fulfil her full potential and dreams for the future."

Our organization supports the principles and actions laid down in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and appeals to all humanitarian inhabitants of the world to observe ethical standards in their relationships with others in order to build a creative society!